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TAGS: PHUM PREL MOPS RW

SUBJECT: RWANDAN FOREIGN MINISTER DOWNPLAYS CONGOLESE FDLR PLAN

REF: A. KIGALI 769

¶B. BUJUMBURA 301

Classified By: CDA Cheryl J. Sim, reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶11. (C) Summary. On October 23 Foreign Minister Charles Murigande expressed considerable reservations about the Congolese "Ex-Far/Interahamwe Action Plan," regarding it as less detailed and less concrete than earlier plans, and in conflict with current planning by the Tripartite-Plus Chiefs of Defense Staff. The plan's focus on voluntary disarmament and repatriation was unrealistic, and the planned "delocalization" of the FDLR did not appear to take them far enough from Rwanda's borders. Murigande expressed frustration with MONUC logistical assistance to the DRC against general Nkunda, claiming MONUC did not offer similar logistical assistance against the FDLR. He said the Government of Rwanda (GOR) would not enter any political discussions with the FDLR, and he called for a clear statement from the international community that the presence of the FDLR in the DRC was unacceptable. He and other Rwandan officials are worried that the DRC's lack of action against the FDLR is a sign of continuing ties between some DRC officials and the military leaders of the FDLR. End summary.

¶12. (C) On October 23 Foreign Minister Murigande addressed participants in a Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) Joint Partner meeting in Kigali, offering a series of comments on the Government of the Democratic of the Congo's (DRC) "Ex-FAR/Interahamwe Action Plan," which the GOR received last week (note: the major components of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda -- the FDLR -- are generally considered to be the remnants of the Habyarimana armed forces and the Interahamwe militia who fled Rwanda at the close of the 1994 genocide).

¶13. (C) Murigande expressed considerable reservations about the plan, calling it "less detailed and less concrete" than earlier plans he had seen in previous years, and in conflict with Chiefs of Defense Staff (CHODS) current planning under the auspices of the Tripartite-Plus process (see reftels). He noted that plan consisted mainly of a broad historical review of the security situation in eastern Congo, which he considered replete with factual errors. The plan's emphasis on voluntary "delocalization" of the FDLR personnel, and their eventual voluntary repatriation, was entirely unrealistic, he said. Sensitization efforts were fine, he said, and continuing appeals to the FDLR rank and file to

return to Rwanda were important messages that needed to continue, he added. But, he said, the FDLR would have to be forcibly disarmed.

¶ 14. (C) When asked about the plan's proposal to move the FDLR away from the border (the plan speaks of sites "remote from the common border") Murigande said that ideally the movement should be to a third country, "out of the Congo and away from their established support networks." He referred to a recent discussion between Presidents Kabila and Kagame at the UN General Assembly in New York, and asserted that Kabila had spoken of moving the FDLR to either Maniema province or the town of Shabunda in South Kivu. Murigande argued that neither would be sufficiently far away, and the FDLR could easily return from either one to the border areas with Rwanda.

¶ 15. (C) Murigande also expressed frustration with MONUC's logistical assistance to the DRC's army in pressuring renegade General Nkunda's forces. Why is it, he asked rhetorically, that when MONUC is asked to pressure the FDLR, it expresses great concern for civilian populations, but has no such concerns when asked to pressure Nkunda? If MONUC helps pressure Nkunda, it should also help press the FDLR, he said.

¶ 16. (C) On the subject of a political opening to the FDLR, perhaps by means of renewed negotiations to be led by Sant Egidio, Murigande emphatically rejected any participation of the Government of Rwanda (GOR) in such discussions. "If Sant Egidio can talk them into returning to Rwanda, fine, but we will not participate." (Note: The Community of Sant Egidio led discussions with the FDLR in Rome in 2005, which resulted in an agreement by the FDLR to disarm and return to Rwanda -- an agreement the GOR was not a party to, and which the FDLR did not honor). Murigande said the FDLR leadership and rank

and file were welcome to return to Rwanda, but no "special treatment" would be accorded to FDLR as a party. "They can come, find work, start new political parties, start businesses, like any other Rwandan."

¶ 17. (C) Murigande finished his remarks by calling upon the international community to make "clear statements" that the presence of "negative forces" such as the FDLR in the DRC "is not acceptable." He also called upon governments to restrict access by FDLR political operatives to international media such as the BBC and the VOA. "Why are these people allowed to speak?" he asked. He then noted that the GOR would reply to the Action Plan in the near future. In an aside to pol/econ chief after the meeting, the International Organizations Director at the Foreign Ministry said that the reply to the Action Plan had already been drafted, and that a copy would be shared with the U.S. Embassy.

¶ 18. (C) Comment. Murigande's presentation was polite, but he minced no words in expressing disappointment with the Congolese plan. He and other Rwandan officials believe the DRC should first proceed against the FDLR, and then tackle Nkunda -- whose raison d'etre, they all aver, will disappear with the disarming/disbanding of the FDLR. Rwandan officials worry that lack of action against the FDLR is not simply a matter of priorities or tactics, but reflects long-standing ties between certain Congolese officials and the FDLR military leadership. End comment.

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